

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MEXICO 08056 260141Z

72

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-14

JUSE-00 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-10 TRSE-00 USIA-15

NSC-10 SCI-06 OMB-01 DODE-00 DRC-01 L-03 AID-20 /134 W

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R 260034Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8587

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 8056

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR/MX

SUBJ: BORDER NARCOTICS CONFERENCE, SAN ANTONIO

PASS DIA FOR AA7

REF: MEXICO 7602

1. SUMMARY: THE LONG-PLANNED BORDER NARCOTICS CONFERENCE WAS HELD OCTOBER 17-19 IN SAN ANTONIO. IT ADHERED CLOSELY TO THE AGENDA AND PARTICIPATION PROPOSED IN THE REFERENCED EMBASSY CABLE. THE EMBASSY NARCOTICS CONTROL COMMITTEE VIEWS THE MEETING AS NOTABLY SUCCESSFUL IN FOSTERING THE VERY SORT OF INTERCHANGE FOR WHICH THE CONFERENCE WAS PLANNED. SET FORTH BELOW ARE SEVERAL CONCLUSIONS WHICH BECAME OBVIOUS DURING THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. INAUGURATED BY AN INFORMAL COCKTAIL OCTOBER 17 AND FOLLOWED BY TWO VERY FULL DAYS OF SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION, THE SAN ANTONIO BORDER NARCOTICS CONFERENCE WAS CHARACTERIZED BY A FREE AND CANDID EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND INFORMATION BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS. USG AGENCIES WERE REPRESENTED BY WASHINGTON-BASED OFFICIALS AND THEIR COUNTER-PARTS FROM EMBASSY MEXICO, AS WELL AS BY DEA AND CUSTOMS PERSONNEL FROM THE BORDER AREAS (SEE REFTTEL FOR AGENCY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 08056 260141Z

PARTICIPATION).

3. EARLY IN THE DISCUSSIONS IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THE MOST COMMON, BASIC, AND RECURRENT PROBLEM INVOLVED THE NEED FOR BETTER INFORMATION AND ITS BROADER DISSEMINATION. THIS APPLIES TO COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AGENCIES AND THE FIELD, CROSS BORDER COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN ELEMENTS OF USG, AND THE NEED FOR INCREASED EXCHANGE OF INTELLIGENCE BETWEEN USG AND GOM NARCOTICS AUTHORITIES. OTHER CONCLUSIONS EMERGING FROM THE MEETING WERE:

(A) TECHNOLOGY AND SOPHISTICATED HARDWARE CAN PROVIDE ESSENTIAL TOOLS, BUT THEY ARE OF LITTLE VALUE WITHOUT THE INTELLIGENCE TO DETERMINE THEIR USE. THE NAME OF THE ANTI-NARCOTICS GAME IS INTELLIGENCE -- BASIC, OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE OBTAINED FROM PAID INFORMANTS, TROOPS IN THE FIELD, INTERROGATIONS OF PRISONERS AND OTHER NON-GLAMOROUS SOURCES.

(B) THERE IS A CHRONIC NEED IN THE MFJP AND MEXICAN ARMY FOR MORE EQUIPMENT. AGAIN IT IS THE BASIC STUFF OF WHICH CAMPAIGNS ARE MADE -- AMMUNITION, VEHICLES AND COMMUNICATIONS GEAR.

(C) PRODUCTION, ERADICATION AND SEIZURE STATISTICS ARE UNRELIABLE AT BEST AND IF TAKEN TOO LITERALLY CAN BE DOWNRIGHT PERNICIOUS. BUT WHILE ATTEMPTING TO REFINE AND PRODUCE MORE ACCURATE QUANTITATIVE DATA, WE MUST RETAIN A SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE AND AVOID BEING DEFLECTED OR WASTING TIME AGONIZING OVER AN IMPOSSIBLE NUMBERS GAME.

(D) THERE ARE WIDE VARIATIONS BETWEEN THE RELATIVE DEGREES OF COOPERATION AND HONESTY (OR LACK THEREOF) OF MEXICAN FEDERAL AND STATE OFFICIALS. SOME ARE EXTREMELY AGGRESSIVE AND EFFECTIVE; OTHERS ARE HOPELESSLY NON-COOPERATIVE AND/OR CORRUPT. BUT TO SAY THAT AN OFFICIAL IS CORRUPT IS NOT NECESSARILY TO SAY THAT HE IS INEFFECTIVE. HE MAY BE CORRUPT IN OTHER THAN DRUG MATTERS, OR HE MAY BE SELECTIVELY ON THE TAKE FROM CERTAIN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS. WHILE WE CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR GOM COMMITMENT OF THE BEST POSSIBLE PERSONNEL TO THE ANTI-DRUG EFFORT, AND ARE PREPARED TO HELP THE GOM TO SINGLE OUT AND RID ITSELF OF NEFARIOUS ELEMENTS, WE REALIZE THAT, IN THE CASE OF THE MFJP FOR EXAMPLE, EVEN A DISHONEST
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MEXICO 08056 260141Z

AGENT MAY BE USED IN SELECTED AREAS OR OPERATIONS, AND THEREFORE BE PREFERABLE TO NO AGENT AT ALL.

(E) WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT THE GOM'S ERADICATION PROGRAM IS A KEY ELEMENT IN ATTACKING THE BROWN HEROIN PROBLEM, WE BELIEVE THAT IT MUST BE TACKLED ON ALL POSSIBLE FRONTS, INCLUDING INTERDICTION IN MEXICO, AT THE BORDER AND IN THE US.

(F) PRESENT AIR SURVEILLANCE FACILITIES CANNOT

MONITOR ALL CROSS-BORDER AIR TRAFFIC. EVEN IF THIS WERE POSSIBLE, THE GREAT VOLUME OF SUCH TRAFFIC RENDERS THE TRACKING AND INTERCEPTION OF ALL UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT A PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY. ONCE AGAIN WE REALIZE THE ESSENTIAL NEED FOR INTELLIGENCE TO IDENTIFY THE POTENTIALLY SUSPECT AIRCRAFT.

(G) MANY MAJOR NARCOTICS VIOLATORS ARE EXTREMELY MOBILE, CHANGING THEIR LOCALE OF OPERATIONS QUICKLY AND EASILY. THE PATTERNS AND STRUCTURE OF THE TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS WILL BECOME CLEARER UPON THE COLLATION AND ANALYSIS OF BORDERWIDE AND COUNTRYWIDE INTELLIGENCE. AT PRESENT THERE ARE HUGE GAPS IN OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE DRUG INFRASTRUCTURE IN MEXICO. THE SAN ANTONIO MEETING AND SUBSEQUENT EFFORTS ARE DESIGNED TO HELP CLOSE THOSE GAPS.

4. A MORE DETAILED REPORT FOLLOWS BY AIRGRAM.
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